

## BOOK REVIEW

KEN E. ROGERS. 2000. **The Magnificent Mesquite**. (ISBN 0-292-77105-3, hbk.). University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713-7819, U.S.A. (Orders: <http://www.utexas.edu/utpress>, 512-471-4032). \$24.95, 167 pp, 18 color photos, 2 line drawings, 5 maps, 12 tables, 5 1/2" × 9".

*Contents.*—

- Introduction
- Mesquite: What Is It?
- Predators of Mesquite
- Mesquite in Texas and the Southwestern United States
- The Uses of Mesquite
- The Mesquite in Verse
- Worldwide Aspects of *Prosopis*
- Texas Ebony—Mesquite's Astonishing Cousin
- Mesquite's Future
- Appendix 1. The Genus *Prosopis* and Its Species
- Appendix 2. Sources of Information
- References and Further Reading
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This book summarizes the biology, ecology, uses, and management of mesquite—an overview of interest to scientists and laymen alike. This broad interest reflects, at least in part, a shift in public perception of these plants, which used to be regarded merely as pests but now are finding wide acceptance for their utility and aesthetic qualities. A table near the end—"Future Areas of New and Increased Mesquite Utilization"—notes the following uses: fine veneers, flooring, ornamentals, desert reclamation, feedstock for chemicals and pharmaceuticals, wood extractives conversion into wood plastics, biomass for energy feedstock, pods for human and livestock consumption, packaged firewood, and lumber. The presentation ranges from a recipe for jelly and instructions on constructing a mesquite wood floor to technical information on predator control, life cycle details, and the physical, mechanical, and chemical properties of the wood. The book is beautifully bound (in handbook size, like "The Pecan Tree" in the same UT Press series) and the contents are nicely organized. Reading is easy and the whole thing can be traversed in detail in a couple of hours.

This reader falls into the general audience but is skewed toward the technical side in expectation, which perhaps underlies a serious disappointment in the mesquite book. The term 'mesquite' is used to refer to the common and conspicuous mesquite of the southwestern USA (*Prosopis glandulosa*) as well as to all species of the genus (*Prosopis* spp.). Page after page, it is difficult if not impossible to tell whether a single species or the whole genus is being referred to. I surely won't be the only one frustrated by this and hope that the author will provide amendments in the next edition of the 'compleat mesquite.'—Guy L. Nesom, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 509 Pecan Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102-4060, U.S.A.